

	Garden Q & A
	Stephen H. Brown



Topic: Coontie Transplant Procedure

Q: I was trying to determine if this is a good time to transplant some mature coonties at one of the properties I maintain. I have been very successful with transplants from pots, however these are big guys which are crowding a fountain. Is winter a good or bad time to transplant? Is there a best time to try it? I understand they are tricky and must not be overwatered or put into rich soil, so what do you think? Yea or nay?

A: There are usually significant differences in plant response after transplanting coontie from a pot as compared to the landscape. A plant transplanted from a pot includes the whole plant, minus a few broken roots. It will not lose leaves or seem to decline in the process. However, a large plant removed from the landscape will have developed a large storage organ called the caudex. Digging to remove the plant will probably break the caudex. If the caudex is broken, store the plant in a dry cool place, with all its leaves, for about a week before replanting. This process allows a “scab” to form over the broken tissue and reduce chances of infection and rot in the soil. After replanting, the plant will generally lose much of its leaves as it further tries to heal the caudex. You can transplant it at anytime of the year. However, if done now, it will take several months for new leaves to appear. That is because coonties produce new leaves in flushes only two or three times a year. The main flush occurs in the spring. Thus, between now and the new leaf growth, the plant will probably be bare of leaves. Thus, yea on transplanting it now, for three main reasons. It will give the caudex sufficient time to heal. The dry season reduces chance of caudex rot. Finally, the plant is cold hardy, so it will not be weakened by a cold front as it tries to recover.



Exposed caudex and roots of mature male plant



Caudex interior

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